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quick facts on...

# Kissimmee Watershed Program

OCTOBER 2006

**The South Florida Water Management District** is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

**Our Mission** is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems, and water supply.

## 2006 Key Accomplishments

- **Completed land acquisition requirements for Kissimmee River Restoration**
- **Next phase of Kissimmee River Restoration backfilling under way**
- **Project one of four finalists for the 2006 Thiess International Riverprize award**



*Wading birds have returned in abundance to the restored area of the Kissimmee River, including the rare black neck stilt.*

The Kissimmee Watershed is the headwaters of the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades system and the single largest source of surface water draining into Lake Okeechobee. Severe flooding throughout Central Florida in the late 1940s led Congress to authorize the Central and Southern Florida Project which included channelization of the Kissimmee River. However, channelization drained most floodplain wetlands resulting in drastic declines in wildlife and ecosystem functions. As a result, in 1992 Congress authorized the Kissimmee River Restoration (KRR) and Headwaters Revitalization projects.

The first of four phases of river restoration filled over seven miles of the C-38 canal and reconnected 15 miles of river channel, and was completed in 2001. The second phase is under way. Land acquisition was completed in 2006. The KRR Comprehensive Evaluation Program will quantify restoration success and provide a scientific basis for adaptive management strategies. Completion of project construction is scheduled for 2012, with restoration evaluation continuing through 2017.

## Agency Strategic Priority

**Integrate Kissimmee Watershed management strategies and river restoration**

## Program Goal

**To restore ecological integrity to the Kissimmee River and its floodplain ecosystem and improve water quality, water supply, natural resources, and flood control level of service in the Kissimmee Watershed**

Under the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes Long Term Management Plan, the District is working with federal and state agencies, local governments, and other stakeholders to develop coordinated agency action plans to enhance water quality, flood protection, habitat and aquatic vegetation management, and recreational use of the lakes. These plans will be completed in 2007.

Because of rapid urban development in the Kissimmee Upper Basin, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the District began development of an operational model of the Kissimmee Watershed in 2005 with the participation of local governments, state and federal agencies, and other stakeholders. When completed in 2007, it will become an important tool for integrating decisions related to Kissimmee Watershed management and Kissimmee River restoration.

Through its Orlando Service Center, the District has established partnerships with local governments to leverage District and local funds for water resource projects consistent with Kissimmee Watershed Program priorities.



## Strategies

- Complete implementation of cost-to-cure in lieu of acquisition projects
- Finalize land acquisition certification and cost crediting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Proactively coordinate with the USACE on backfilling, construction, modeling, and environmental monitoring projects
- Provide comprehensive and timely reviews of construction plans and specifications
- Provide the USACE with performance measures, modeling tools and results to develop preferred alternative operating criteria for the Kissimmee Watershed
- Coordinate with interagency partners to complete Kissimmee Chain of Lakes Long Term Management Plan components
- Establish and maintain partnerships with local governments that leverage District resources

## Success Indicators

- Complete implementation of the Kissimmee River Restoration Project by December 2017
  - Select preferred alternative operating criteria for the Kissimmee Basin Modeling and Operations Study by August 2007
  - Complete land certification by December 2007
  - Complete the Kissimmee Basin Modeling and Operations Study by December 2007
  - Complete implementation of cost-to-cure in lieu of acquisition projects by December 2007
  - Support the USACE in implementation of the Kissimmee River Restoration Headwaters Revitalization Project by December 2010
  - Complete construction and backfilling Phases II, III and IV by December 2012
  - Complete Restoration Evaluation Program monitoring by December 2017
- Complete the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes Long Term Management Plan by July 2007
- Complete Local Water Resource Partnership Projects annually



The restored section of the Kissimmee has been receiving a life-giving sheetflow of water that is healing the floodplain-dependent ecosystem. Native plants are now thriving, wading birds have returned and a greater percentage of fish are in river channels. The next phase of this four-part restoration program began in July 2006.



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 Florida Keys (Plantation Key)  
 305-853-3219 or 800-464-5067  
 Lower West Coast  
 239-338-2929 or 800-248-1201

Martin/St. Lucie  
 772-223-2600 or 800-250-4100  
 Miami-Dade  
 305-377-7274 or 800-250-4300  
 Okeechobee  
 863-462-5260 or 800-250-4200  
 Orlando  
 407-858-6100 or 800-250-4250  
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 561-682-2283 or 800-432-2045